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TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV UG SU CG

SUBJECT: UGANDAN OFFICIALS NOT SURPRISED BY KONY'S MOVEMENT
INTO CAR

REF: KAMPALA 301

Classified By: P/E Chief Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: Ugandan Government officials state that Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony's movement into Central African Republic (CAR) came as no surprise. They have been pointing to LRA movements on the ground, away from the direction of the Rikwangba assembly site, as evidence that the LRA was using peace negotiations to buy time or divert attention from its real intentions. The GOU will go ahead with planning processes to implement its obligations under the Final Peace Agreement regardless of LRA activities on the ground in order to expose the LRA's bad faith commitments and justify possible Ugandan military operations. End Summary.

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KONY RELOCATES TO CAR
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¶2. (S) Post received reports of LRA leader Joseph Kony's movement to CAR on March 14 from Ugandan Government officials and an International Criminal Court (ICC) analyst. On March 16, LRA Colonel Leonard Bwone Lubowa informed P/E Chief that the BBC radio reports of Kony's relocation were true. Kony was 50 miles inside of CAR. Bwone had traveled with Kony and was now with ICC indictee Okot Odhiambo and General Abudema, who were laying landmines to prevent an attack on Kony. At the time of the call, Bwone was 30 miles away from Kony and 20 miles inside of CAR. Bwone reported that Kony had moved at near lightening speed, traveling 270 kilometers from near Duru, DRC, to his current location in a 48 hour period. Bwone did not mention the locations of ICC indictee Dominic Ongwen or Thomas Kwoyello. Bwone said that political borders meant nothing to the LRA and that the group has moved around without any difficulties between four countries: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, CAR, and Chad.

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CHADIAN CONNECTION
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¶3. (S) According to Bwone, Kony was in CAR with Chadian rebel leader Mahamat Nouri, who allegedly had 2,000 people with him. Bwone was with Kony when he met with Nouri. According to Bwone, Khartoum linked the Chadian, CAR, and Ugandan rebel groups under one umbrella and was moving them to Darfur. Bwone described the coordination by Khartoum of these groups as "strong," and mentioned that Kony also was talking to another Chadian rebel who may be in Cameroon or northern CAR. Bwone also reported that Khartoum had links with the Acholi diaspora and may be funneling some of their support to the LRA.

¶4. (S) Kony plans to travel through CAR on his way to Sudan,

according to Bwone. Former LRA defectors and Ugandan security officials tell us that Kony's destination is Bahr-el-gazel. Rank-and-file LRA call it Darfur. Several sources, including Bwone, said that Khartoum was moving the LRA to Darfur to work with the janjaweed. Bwone stated that Khartoum's intention was not to allow the "SPLA fellows to have their elections in Juba." He also claimed that there were some LRA members in Chad and Sudan with Nouri's forces.

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LRA MOVEMENTS AND THE FINAL PEACE AGREEMENT
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¶15. (S) Bwone reported that there were 60 LRA fighters at or near Rikwangba and only 70 left in the group's Garamba National Park hide-out. He said that Kony was heavily armed, with "four unused large weapons that can shoot down aircraft, weapons that had been abandoned in southern Sudan, and ammunition delivered by the Arabs." Bwone said that any force that attempted to attack Kony would be in for a "beating" due to the weapons and the LRA's knowledge of the terrain.

¶16. (S) Kony has no intention of signing the Final Peace Agreement (FPA), according to Bwone. LRA delegation leader David Matsanga, who does not have contact with Kony, would not be signing either, Bwone noted. Matsanga's primary contacts were General Abudema and Santo Alit, who told Matsanga to delay signature until the grass got too tall for the Ugandan military, the only force that Kony fears, to find him and for the rainy season to start in April.

¶17. (S) The LRA movements are technically violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. Minister of Internal

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Affairs Ruhakana Rugunda and External Security Organization Director Robert Masolo told us about the likely LRA movements before they happened based on information from LRA defectors about Kony's contingency plans. The GOU was not surprised by Kony's move into CAR after the large movement of LRA in mid-February. "It was only a matter of time," according to Rugunda. The advance group allegedly was about 200-250 in number, according to MONUC and former LRA members, and contained ICC indictees Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen. LRA Lieutenant General Ceasar Acel-lam reportedly left Kony's group in mid-February. Acel-lam fled after two "brutal" attempts on his life by Kony, according to Bwone. Acel-lam was located near Kiliwe, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), some 300 kilometers away from Kony's main group, which reportedly had been encamped near Duru until it moved to CAR.

¶18. (SBU) The GOU's deputy negotiator, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Henry Okello Oryem, told P/E Chief that no firm date had been set to return to Juba in order to clarify the signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA). Southern Sudanese Mediator Riek Machar wanted the GOU to return on March 19 or 20, but with Libyan leader Qaddafi in Kampala all week, the GOU declined. Machar then suggested the following week. LRA delegation members also said no firm date had been scheduled. Matsanga told P/E Chief on March 14 that the LRA would not sign the peace deal until the ICC warrants had been lifted.

¶19. (C) Both Oryem and another negotiator, Steven Kagoda, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, said that the Government would continue its planning processes for implementing its obligations under the agreement. The GOU would go ahead and play its role, Oryem said, which would contrast starkly with the LRA's bad faith. Kagoda said he was holding a planning meeting on March 18 to organize tasks for the various government agencies involved in implementing the agreement. The Government plans to use existing structures, such as the Amnesty Commission, rather than create new institutions, which would be costly given the diminishing likelihood the LRA would follow through on the

deal. Principal Judge James Ogoal, who is charged with creating the Special Division of the High Court, told the Ambassador and visiting USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore that the creation of the court was a special case, which had never been done before. As a result, the Government's preparations were largely a work in progress and primarily at the conceptualization stage.

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SPOILERS WOOING VARIOUS LRA COMMANDERS
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¶10. (C) Several LRA commanders have claimed that they want to leave Kony in the aftermath of LRA deputy Vincent Otti's death, but they have yet to surface (reftel). These LRA complained that they were tired of living in the bush and did not agree with Kony's operational plans to move through CAR and into Sudan. Rugunda and fellow negotiator Henry Okello Oryem have consistently noted a negative role being played by Acholi diaspora in discouraging LRA from defecting.

¶11. (S) The Government believes Bwone to be a very reliable source and is taking steps to assist him and the 200 people with him to escape. Deputy Director for External Security Organization Emmy Allio said the Government would be moving quickly to assist Acel-lam, Bwone, and the others that wanted to leave. Bwone said it was critical to reduce the LRA numbers and to rescue those that did not want to go to Darfur. Acel-lam allegedly was waiting for Bwone's group to be able to separate from the LRA, and hoped Acel-lam would lead Bwone's group in. Bwone said he would be leaving Kony's group to return to his own, which was near Yambio, southern Sudan by the end of the week.

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COMMENT
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¶12. (C) LRA movements support the Government's doubts about Kony's willingness to sign the Final Peace Agreement. The Government believes that it has gone the extra mile to give Kony a deal that addressed his key concern, the ICC. The GOU, particularly the Ugandan military, will use the LRA's movements and failure to sign the agreement as evidence for the international community and northern Ugandans that military operations against Kony are justified. Government officials already have made public statements de-linking the peace process from northern Uganda's recovery to minimize the psychological impact of the LRA's negative behavior.

¶13. (C) The LRA movement and alleged links with Chadian

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rebels seriously complicate efforts to bring Kony in peacefully or through a military operation. The alleged revitalization of Khartoum's support for the LRA, and role in linking the LRA with other rebel groups, creates a more dangerous and complex situation for the Ugandan military, which continues to advocate military operations against the LRA but would have difficulty sustaining the logistics of a strike against a well-armed Kony in CAR.

BROWNING